

Event: A New Portrait of America, First 2010 Census Results
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Speaker: Dr. Robert M. Groves
Program: Remarks (20 mins), Questions (30 mins)
Attendees/Call-Ins: Media

REMARKS FOR THE DECEMBER 21, 2010 A NEW PORTRAIT OF AMERICA, FIRST 2010 CENSUS RESULTS

Today, we report to the American Public the 2010 Census national and state population counts, and the apportionment results for the U.S. House of Representatives. This marks the 23rd time since 1790, when we were just 3.9 million people, that all residents of the United States came together to count themselves and, thus, made possible a critical step in our democracy.

We begin this release with the revelation of the national population count – the official population of the United States as of April 1, 2010. The population on that date is the cumulative effect of generations of Americans growing and moving throughout the country.

If we track the growth of the 50 states, even reflecting populations of territories that later became states, we see a decade of remarkable growth. A hundred years ago in 1910, there were 92 million people. By 1970, the population had more than doubled. Ten years ago, according to the 2000 Census, the resident population, that is, the population of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, was 281,421,906 persons.

Under a constitutional mandate, the Census Bureau was charged, once again, with the job of conducting the 2010 Census to update this number. In early 2009, our staff visited every street in the country to update our list of all addresses. Then, in 2010, we mailed or delivered 132 million forms. We worked with over 250 thousand community and civic organizations to promote the census. We hired 600 thousand staff members to knock on nearly 50 million doors to collect data in person. We optically scanned 166 million forms. We built and reviewed very large data sets stripped of personal identifiers. At this point, I am happy to note, we have finished the work required to produce our first 2010 Census product.

As of April 1, 2010, according to the 2010 Census...the resident US population is 308,745,538. This 2010 Census population represents a growth of 9.7 percent over the official population count of 2000.

Now I am going to provide more details, including the 2010 state population counts and review the results of the reapportionment of the House of Representatives.

First, let's break down the national figures to see the variation within the country, showing geographical variation in population growth. Here we see the continuation of a multi-decade trend of growth in the Southern and Western regions.

- The Northeast grew by 3.2 percent.
- The Midwest grew by 3.9 percent.
- The South, already the region with the largest population, grew by 14.3 percent.
- And finally, the West grew by 13.8 percent.

If we consider the states individually, we see large variation across them. Many different circumstances have combined to contribute to the population growth or decline in each state. The state with the largest rate of population growth is Nevada with 35.1 percent. On the other hand, Michigan saw a decline of 0.6 percent and Puerto Rico, a decline of 2.2 percent. In Census 2000, no states had experienced a ten year decline; however, in the 1990 Census, four states reported a decline.

Even within regions, the growth rates show variation.

- In the Northeast, we see Rhode Island with 0.4 percent compared to New Hampshire with 6.5 percent.
- In the Midwest, we again see the decline in Michigan, but a 7.9 percent growth in South Dakota.
- In the South, there was a great range among the individual states. For instance, Louisiana with a 1.4 percent growth and West Virginia with 2.5 percent growth can be contrasted to Texas, with 20.6 percent.
- In the West, there is an even wider difference between Montana with 9.7 percent and again Nevada with 35.1 percent growth.

Let's turn to the implication of the 2010 official census results on the membership of the US House of Representatives. The constitutional purpose of the Census is the redistribution of the membership of the House of Representatives across states, proportional to their populations.

Since 1940, law has specified that the Census Bureau use the Method of Equal Proportions to assign seats to states. The method is based on the population of the 50 states (not including the District of Columbia), supplemented by the Federally-affiliated overseas population. If we consider the congressional apportionment each decade since the 1940 Census, the trend is a growth in seats for Western and Southern states, and a tendency to lose seats from the Midwestern and Northeastern states – a total of 79 seats since 1940.

The effect of the official 2010 population counts at the state level on the Congressional Apportionment is a shift of 12 seats affecting 18 states. Those states gaining seats include Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, and Washington. Those losing seats are Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. For 32 states, there is no change. Texas gained the most seats this decade (a total of four), and has gained seats for seven consecutive decades.

As to the national snapshot, according to the 2010 Census apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives: California will have 53 seats; Texas will have 36; and New York and Florida will each have 27. Seven states have only one representative. The average population size of each House district will be 710,767 persons, up from the 646,952 persons at this time in 2000.

But now, let us return to examining the pattern of population change. Over the last one hundred years the rate of growth of the total US population has gradually slowed, but there is much variation across the decades—as you can see from the red line. There are two notable decades. Between 1930-1940, the small growth rate of 7.3 percent is related to the Great Depression of the 1930's. Between 1950-1960, the high growth rate of 18.5 percent reflects the so-called “baby boom.” The percentage growth this last decade, 9.7 percent, is thus the second lowest of the past century.

The Census Bureau also tracks the center of the population each decade. In 1790, the center was in Kent County Maryland; it has consistently moved West and in more recent decades, noticeably South. We have not yet computed the new center; we cannot wait to see whether the center of the population will remain somewhere in the state of Missouri or move south to Arkansas.

Still yet another way of looking at change in the population over time is to consider the relative sizes of the four major regions of the country. In 1910, the West region comprised only 7.7 percent of the national population. In 1990, for the first time, the Northeast became our smallest region with 20.4 percent. The Northeast and Midwest regions consistently declined in relative size over the last hundred years. In contrast, by the 2000 Census, the West was 22.5 percent of the national population. Based on the 2010 results, we note that this is the first decade that the West Region is more populous than the Midwest.

Let us also look at the states with the largest and smallest populations in the country. In 1910, four of the five most populous states were in the Northeast and Midwest, with Texas as the fifth. Starting in 1940, California displaced Texas. By 1970, Texas rejoined the top five. In 1990, Florida joined the top five. New York is the only state that has ranked among the five largest in each decade—in fact, this has been true since 1790. What are the top five most populous states as of April 1, 2010? They are California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois.

The identities of the five least populous states vary a little less over the decades. In fact, if we look at Alaska, I will note that it grew from 64 thousand as a territory in 1910 to 627 thousand in 2000; yet has always been among the five least populous states. We note that Delaware and Vermont on the East Coast are also consistently among the least populous states. Today, according to the 2010 Census, the least populous states include Wyoming, Vermont, North Dakota, Alaska, and South Dakota.

I have been talking about the size of populations, but now let us turn to percentage change, the rate of growth of populations over the decade. Between 1920-1930, Michigan grew at a rate of 32 percent, reflecting the growing manufacturing sector in the state. Between 1950 and 1960, Florida grew at a fast rate of 78.7 percent, reflecting the large in-migration from New York and other Northern states, the prevalence of air conditioning, and economic conditions in the state. Arizona has been among the five states

with the highest percentage growth for nine of the last ten decades—starting with a growth rate of 63.5 percent between 1910-1920, and then more recently between 1990-2000, 40.0 percent. Based on the 2010 Census the five states with the fastest growth rate during this past decade are Nevada, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, and Texas.

There is also a story to tell for the states with the slowest growth or declines over the past century. These changes reflect the Great Migration from the South during the 1920s, out of states such as Georgia. Or, during the Dustbowl years in the 1930s and 1940s when the residents of the Great Plains were forced to leave. Also, consider West Virginia, where the population declined for two decades, then rebounded strongly in the 1970s, reflecting the changing fortunes of coal mining. Losses can be temporary. This decade, the five states with the slowest growth included Michigan, Rhode Island, Louisiana, Ohio, and New York.

Finally, let us turn to the geographical dispersion of the population. We're a large country geographically; but our population is not evenly spread throughout it. An important population attribute is population density, the average number of persons per square mile. I have been talking a lot about movement east to west, but it is important to note the five states with the highest population density have remained the same for the past forty years – New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maryland – all of these were part of the original 13 states. Similarly, the five states with the lowest population density have remained the same for the last twenty years, although the ranking varies somewhat – they are Alaska, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota, and South Dakota– states with some of the larger land mass.

This completes our first look at the results of the 2010 Census. There is much more to come, revealing how our nation has changed over the last ten years at levels as small as city blocks, school districts, counties, and cities.

I want to end this press conference with a thank you. To the nearly 309 million residents of this wonderful country I thank you on behalf of all of us at the Census Bureau for your civic participation in the 2010 Census. To Secretary Locke and Deputy Secretary Blank, I thank you for the hundreds of hours you spent assuring that this Census was successful, was conducted in a nonpartisan and statistically valid way. I want to thank you for coming today.

